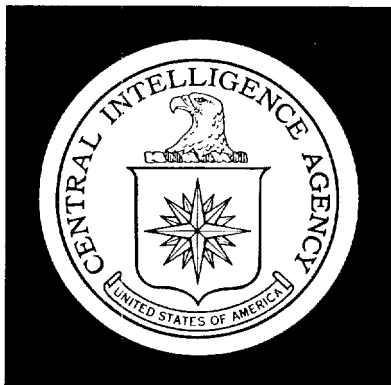


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South Vietnam: In reaction to the recent US announcement of additional troop withdrawals, Saigon's regional military commanders may begin lobbying to retain US troops in their areas as long as possible.

The essence of recent comments by General Lam, who has long been a dominant figure in the important I Corps region, was that the area under his command needed more strength and sustained pressure on the Communists. This contrasts with his more confident predictions earlier this year about the prospects for successful, gradual Vietnamization of the war.

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[redacted] Lam indicated that there was still much to be done to put the government in a strong position for next year's presidential elections, even though substantial progress has been made in consolidating government control over the northern provinces. He showed particular concern because of large North Vietnamese units just above the Demilitarized Zone and along the Laos border.

Other high-level officers in the northern provinces have expressed similar views. Some have again raised the specter of psychological and territorial losses to the Communists should there be any large-scale and rapid reduction of US forces from I Corps. They noted that there were more North Vietnamese forces in I Corps than in any other region in the South, and specifically warned against precipitate withdrawal of US Marines from the Da Nang area.

These remarks may be part of a concerted effort by South Vietnamese officers in I Corps to begin making a case for keeping as many American troops as possible in their region for as long as possible. Other South Vietnamese regional commanders can also be expected to put in their bids to retain US troops, as US authorities decide which American units are to be pulled out first in coming months.

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West Germany - Poland: Bonn has provided details of the West German position during the recent meeting with the Poles.

A West German working paper suggested a statement by both governments that the Oder-Neisse line is the western frontier of Poland, that both respect existing borders, and that they will pose no territorial demands, now or in the future. By these points, the West Germans made an effort to meet Polish desires.

The working paper also specified that existing treaties are not to be affected by the projected agreement. The paper states that the border agreements "will have to be confirmed in a peace settlement for Germany as a whole." This language expresses the West German insistence that Germany's borders are only to be finally settled by a peace conference, as prescribed by the Potsdam and Paris agreements. The word "confirm" also seems to imply that the West Germans see the function of a peace conference, at least with respect to Poland's western border, as simply confirming bilateral arrangements already reached.

The German negotiator, Georg Duckwitz, pleaded Bonn's political need for some Polish concessions, in order to make an eventual agreement palatable to the West German public and to the Bundestag. Chancellor Brandt had also stressed this theme in a letter to Polish party leader Gomulka.

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[redacted] Warsaw has, in fact, shown some understanding of Bonn's domestic political problems, proposing an early separate agreement raising the respective trade missions virtually to the level of consulates.

Gomulka probably will elaborate the current Polish position during his expected speech at a VE-Day rally on 9 May.

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USSR-Berlin: At the second session of the quadripartite Berlin talks on Tuesday, Soviet Ambassador Abrasimov hinted at interest in achieving a general understanding with the Allies. He adopted a moderate tone, making it clear that Moscow is ready to listen to "constructive" Western proposals aimed at lessening tension over Berlin. However, he stressed the relationship between "illegal political provocations" by West Germany and problems that had occurred in connection with access to the city. Abrasimov did not spell out the usual argument that East Germany has primary responsibility for access, but asked for legal documentation for the Allies' claim of quadripartite responsibility. The four powers will meet again on 14 May.

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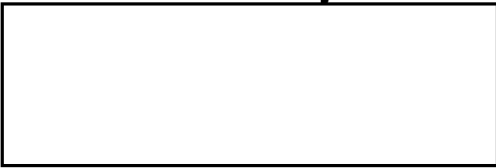
[Somalia: The government demanded yesterday that five US Embassy officers leave the country within 48 hours. Foreign Secretary Arteh told Ambassador Hadsel that the five have been involved in "counter-revolutionary activities." He specifically linked them with Supreme Revolutionary Council Vice President Korshel, who was recently arrested along with several dozen other officials for allegedly plotting against the regime. Much publicity has been given to General Korshel's supposed contacts with "a foreign power," a line probably pushed by the sizable group of anti-US Council members. Pressure for the expulsion presumably originated with this group, which will now almost certainly use the issue to fan further anti-American sentiment.

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